

island, wedge-shaped in elevation and rising to about 10 m above sea level (Johnstone, 1978). There is a sandy beach on the eastern side of the island where small boats can land through gaps in surrounding reefs.

On the day in question, which was fine (16°C) and calm with a light north-westerly breeze, 39 sea lions were present on the beach or at the water's edge. This number was made up of 19 breeding females, 17 pups and yearlings, and 3 males—two adult and one sub-adult. Two very small dead pups were also found further inland on higher ground. The youngest living pups were estimated to be from 6 to 8 weeks old and the age range of the pups and yearlings was similar to that observed on Kangaroo Island at about the same time of this year (Ling and Walker, unpublished data). Thus pupping appears to have occurred simultaneously at both localities.

However, breeding is not contemporaneous over the sea lion's entire range in South Australia, since pupping did not occur simultaneously at other colonies, e.g., Dangerous Reef, Nuyts Archipelago and Olive and Purdie Islands. To date there is insufficient information to be able to determine the reproductive cycle at these known breeding sites.

The figures reported here agree closely with those of Chapman and Kitchener (1977) who also stated that the period of births appears to extend throughout the year, with the proportion of newborn young in the colony being highest in May and June. However, Ling and Walker (1978) have suggested that *Neophoca* has an 18-month breeding cycle—at least on Kangaroo Island—and it would be interesting to ascertain if this is true of North Fisherman Island.

A careful analysis of pup counts and birth dates, particularly among individually recognisable cows (in the absence of marked animals), should provide a more precise indication of the sea lion's breeding cycle near the western end of its range. Furthermore, similar data are required from all major breeding sites throughout the range in order to determine the population trends of this widely ranging, numerically rare species.

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CORRECTION

Two corrections are necessary for the Field and Study item, "Breeding behaviour in the atherine fish *Craterocephalus*", by W. H. Butler in the preceding issue, *W. Aust. Nat.*, 14 (6), August 1979: 158.

In paragraph 3, the sentences in line 5, following ". . . vigorous jets of water to be thrown into the air", should read: "As each wave ebbed fish were left stranded headstanding above the water-line. The vertically held tails flicked vigorously."

In paragraph 2 the measurements in line 9 should read "35.0 to 40.0 mm."